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AD NUMBER	
AD389958	
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FROM:	confidential
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AUTHORITY	
31 Aug 1978, per document marking, DoDD 5200.10; AGO D/A ltr 29 Apr 1980	

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(18) OACSFOR (19) OT-RD-660133

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(12) 8p.

AD389958

Lessons Learned, HEADQUARTERS,  
1ST HOWITZER BATTALION 30TH ARTILLERY  
APO 96238

AVF-AT-30 (9)

SUBJECT: Operational Report, for quarterly period ending 31 July 1966.  
Reports Control Symbol (CSFOR-65). (u)

THRU: Commanding Officer  
52nd Artillery Group  
APO 96295

TO: See Distribution

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SECTION I

Significant Unit Activities

1. (C) During the majority of the period 1 May to 31 July 1966, the firing batteries were detached from the battalion and placed under the operational control of various major US units in order to provide additional fire support for those units operating throughout the II Corps Tactical Zone. Battery A supported the 2nd Brigade of the 25th Infantry Division on Operation PAUL REVEREND. Battery B moved the length and breadth of the II Corps Zone providing fire support for the 1st Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division on Operations AUGUST VI, COOPER, HILLTOP, BURNING, and JOHN PAUL JONES. Battery C supported the 1st Air Cavalry Division on Operations DAVENY CRACKERS, CHASE MORON, ROCK IN I, BURNING, and HARRY CLAY. In support of these various operations, the batteries expended a total of 24,291 rounds of 155mm ammunition.

2. (U) While the firing batteries were employed in the above mentioned operations, the remainder of the battalion initiated the construction of a permanent cantonment area, ten miles west of the main base. In May, plans were approved to enlarge the existing base area to eventually accommodate the entire battalion. A total of 78 buildings to house various elements of the battalion were approved for construction. The construction of these buildings and various other installations within the base area were to be accomplished using troop labor under a 250-2500 program. On 10 June 1966 the battalion 4 section drew the initial building materials to start the construction program. As of 31 July the battalion has drawn over 150,000 feet of various size lumber, 3000 bags of cement and adequate roofing and screening material to construct 10 of the authorized buildings. Primary emphasis was on troop billets to provide adequate

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shelter for personnel prior to the advent of the monsoon season. Selected offices and mess halls were also among the buildings programmed for early completion. To date, 18 buildings are complete and 17 are expected to be completed prior to 1 September 1966. As part of the area development program, a well was dug and is now in the process of being cased to provide an additional water supply for the base camp. This will diminish the battalion's dependence on external and less pure water sources and will eliminate the numerous time consuming water runs made each day. An additional phase of the base camp development has been the design and installation of electrical power lines which will provide adequate power, utilizing existing generators to service the entire base camp area. Throughout the Self-Help Construction Program, unit troop labor and organic facilities have been utilized. However, technical support has more than adequately been provided by engineer personnel located within the Qui Nhon Support Command.

3. (C) Specialized training was emphasized during the period for selected members of the firing batteries, to familiarize them with Fire Direction techniques. To enhance this training, a formal four week course of instruction was administered at the base camp by battalion headquarters personnel. The course of instruction consisted of 34 hours of lecture and applicatory periods of instruction, covering the following areas: Construction and use of the 6400 mil firing chart employed by the battalion for operations in Viet Nam; precision type registrations using the new York registration method; computation of metro messages and the application of velocity error (VE) corrections; use of logarithmic tables with high burst and Center of Impact Registrations; obtaining and application of data used with special ammunition; the care and use of equipment peculiar to fire direction centers; numerous hours on standard gunnery procedures; and the application of these procedures in extensive team drill. The course was terminated and high-lighted by a live shoot service practice conducted in the Phu Cat mountains (coord GR 900 570), with fire being concentrated on those areas known to be Viet Cong strongholds. On the completion of the course, these personnel were returned to their respective firing batteries and now provide adequate depth to the battery Fire Direction Centers. The battalion also provided an instructional radar team to the 1st Air Cavalry Division to assist in training the divisions newly acquired counter mortar radar detachments. This team traveled to ACHH and provided the knowledge and practical experience acquired by the battalion counter mortar radar detachment during Operations HUNG HO V and BIRN PHU I.

4. (U) During the reported period morale within the battalion was excellent. The battalion sent 140 personnel on both "in" and "out" of country RTR. This constituted approximately 24% of the average present for duty strength during the period. Through personnel liaison and coordination with the Special Services Office in Qui Nhon, the following additional morale and welfare activities were enjoyed by battalion personnel:

- a. USAFI correspondence courses and course material.
- b. Deep Sea Fishing Trips.
- c. USO Variety shows.

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3. (C) Specialized training was emphasized during the period for selected members of the firing batteries, to familiarize them with Fire Direction techniques. To enhance this training, a formal four week course of instruction was administered at the base camp by battalion headquarters personnel. The course of instruction consisted of 64 hours of lecture and applicatory periods of instruction, covering the following areas: Construction and use of the 6400 mil firing chart employed by the battalion for operations in Viet Nam; precision type registrations using the new York registration method; computation of metro messages and the application of velocity error (VE) corrections; use of logarithmic tables with high burst and Center of Impact Registrations; obtaining and application of data used with special ammunition; the care and use of equipment peculiar to fire direction centers; numerous hours on standard gunnery procedures; and the application of these procedures in extensive team drill. The course was terminated and high-lighted by a live shoot service practice conducted in the Phu Cat mountains (coord GR 930 570), with fire being concentrated on those areas known to be Viet Cong strongholds. On the completion of the course, these personnel were returned to their respective firing batteries and now provide adequate depth to the battery Fire Direction Centers. The battalion also provided an instructional radar team to the 1st Air Cavalry Division to assist in training the divisions newly acquired counter mortar radar detachments. This team traveled to AN FIE and provided the knowledge and practical experience acquired by the battalion counter mortar radar detachment during Operations HUNG HO V and BINH PHU I.

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d. Vietnamese language instruction.

e. Various athletic activities to include basketball, softball and volleyball on courts and diamonds constructed within the base camp under the Self-Help Construction Program.

The battalion also had numerous awards for valor and meritorious service presented to individuals which are listed below:

Bronze Star with Valor

1st Lt David R. Drake

Army Medal of Commendation with Valor

1st Lt James T. Pittman

Air Medal

Lt Col Charles C. Wigner  
Capt Robert E. Brown  
Capt Charles E. Smith  
1st Lt Denis P. Smith

Purple Heart

1st Lt David R. Drake  
1st Lt Denis P. Smith  
Sp4 Charles Tillman

## SECTION II

### Commanders Observations and Recommendations (C)

#### Part I Observations (Lessons Learned)

a. ITEM: Typewriters

DISCUSSION: Battalion administration, to include the S-1 section and the personnel section, are authorized a total of three typewriters. Experience has shown that this is not an adequate number.

OBSERVATION: The S-1 section should be authorized a typewriter. The personnel section should be augmented by two typewriters: one additional for the finance and one for the records clerk.

b. ITEM: Promotional Squeezes

DISCUSSION: Authorization for increased enlisted strength over TOE without a concurrent authorization to promote above TOE creates a promotion block. This in turn affects initiative.

OBSERVATION: Authorization for increased enlisted strength over TOE should always be accompanied by authorization to promote over TOE.

c. ITEM: Split platoon operations, such as those experienced by "A" battery on Operation PAUL HENRI, "D" battery on Operation ALBERT VI, and "C" battery on all operations throughout the period, plus the need for a twenty-four hour capability in both platoons, have increased the battery requirement for FDC trained personnel beyond the TOE assigned strength.

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DISCUSSION: To meet the increased need for persons trained in FDC techniques, the Battalion initiated a four week school in the base camp area for cannoners who showed an aptitude for gunnery. Using available equipment and materials, the men were given instruction in fire direction with particular emphasis on procedures used in Vietnam. At the conclusion of the course, the students were returned to their units and an evaluation of their abilities was furnished the Battery Commanders.

OBSERVATION: Artillery units deploying to Vietnam should anticipate this requirement and in addition to commencing training for non-TOE FDC personnel, should bring the necessary instructional material (Ft Sill notes and lesson plans in particular) to accomplish further training in Vietnam upon arrival.

## d. ITEM: Prefabrication of Buildings

DISCUSSION: The Self Help Construction Program utilizes relatively unskilled troops to perform all phases of construction to blueprint standards. Unless the construction program is under unified supervision, waste of material and poor standards may result. The control of all materials was consolidated under one individual qualified in carpentry. Further, a permanent crew was assigned to construct side, end and rafter sections for the buildings using prefabrication forms to insure uniform production. Once prefabricated, an entire building was issued to the battery concerned and a standard structure could then be erected.

OBSERVATION: Prefabrication proved to be a successful method of overcoming waste of material and time. Utilization of manpower and material must not be left to chance.

## e. ITEM: Hand and Power Tools for Construction

DISCUSSION: The TOE of a combat unit does not include sufficient carpentry tools to permit construction on the scale required by a self help program. An engineer unit is normally assigned the requirement of support, both technically and logistically, but experience has proven that engineer construction projects preclude the loaning of tools except in a limited number.

OBSERVATION: Units preparing for movement to this theater of operations should procure through supply channels a large number of hand tools. Emphasis should be placed on claw hammers, hand saws (with files to sharpen them), and an adequate number of steel measuring tapes and carpenters levels. If funds allow, it is recommended that each company or battery sized unit purchase several heavy duty Skill Saws, with a minimum of three (3) extra blades, and adequate extension cords per saw.

## f. ITEM: Repair Parts

DISCUSSION: A great percentage of down time of the 155mm howitzer is due to frequent breakdown of the firing mechanism safety latch plunger FSN 1025. Addition of the safety latch plunger to the 2nd echelon LIL will

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result in immediate availability of this item at user level. Presently, replacing the safety latch plunger is a 3rd echelon responsibility. Since direct support units for the 155mm howitzers are normally not immediately available, a training program was initiated whereby user personnel were instructed on the simple operation of replacing the safety latch plunger.

OBSERVATION: By adding the safety latch plunger to the 2nd echelon PIL more realistic demand data could be compiled and the item would be stocked in sufficient quantity to minimize deadlines.

## g. ITEM: Potable water shortage in the Field

DISCUSSION: During extended field operations it has been found that one water trailer is not enough to supply the batteries with sufficient potable water. This problem is often multiplied when elements, such as radar sections, infantry elements, and searchlight platoons are attached and must be supported. Additional hardships are experienced when Firing batteries operate away from the parent unit. When a Firing battery is further placed in split operation, that is two platoons of the battery are in separated firing positions, the problem is severely magnified. With only one water trailer available these elements have to do the best they can with 5 gallon water cans.

OBSERVATION: This situation can be remedied by issuing an additional water trailer to units of this size. Another possibility is the development of a collapsible rubber tank similar to the one used to transport gasoline.

## h. ITEM: Disinfecting of medical instruments

DISCUSSION: Because of the climate in this particular area, it has been noted that the use of "Germicidal Solution", the normal substance in which instruments are disinfected, causes rust on the instruments in a very short period of time.

OBSERVATION: This situation can be corrected using "Isopropyl alcohol", a disinfecting solution easily obtained in the theater.

## i. ITEM: AM radio communications

DISCUSSION: The equipment available to the Battalion, the AM/GNC-400, has a peak output of less than 100 watts. It has been found that during the time from 2000 hours until 0300 hours, this wattage is insufficient to overcome the atmospheric phenomena in Vietnam and AM radio messages either fail to reach their destination or arrive hopelessly garbled. The only solution thus far has been to attempt to route AM traffic during daylight hours and to send nocturnal messages utilizing the equipment of units nearby that possess a greater wattage.

OBSERVATION: The feasibility of providing all units that must rely on AM communications with the more powerful unit, the AM/GNC-300, should be explored to alleviate the present AM difficulties in Vietnam.

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## Part II Commanders Recommendations

None

*Charles C. Wigner*  
CHARLES C. WIGNER  
Lt Col            Arty  
Commanding

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AVFA-AT-52-CO (10 Aug 66)

1st Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 July 1966  
RCS(CSFOR-65)

HEADQUARTERS, 52D ARTILLERY GROUP, APO 96295, 19 August 1966

TO: Headquarters, Department of the Army, ATTN: ACSFOR, Washington,  
D. C. 20310

1. Forwarded.
2. Concur in commander's observations. Report is considered adequate.

*O. L. Tobiasch*

O. L. TOBIASCH  
Colonel, Artillery  
Commanding

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